

**TESTIMONY OF PRIMA BARTLETT, PHR SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 15, 2017**

H.B. No. 7027

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I currently work for Generations Family Health Center where I am the Human Resources & Operations Support Associate and interact with Eastern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Inc. as community partner, facilitating requisite BLS training for our staff. The CPR/AED & First Aid training and certification provided by Eastern AHEC is crucial to our provider and support staff obtaining and maintaining BLS and CPR certification required by DPH and other regulatory agencies. Partnership with Eastern AHEC allows us more flexibility in scheduling these classes which helps us to best serve our patients.

The CT AHEC Program or network directly supports primary care workforce development in the state by “connecting students to careers in health, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.” Funded since 1997, the CT AHEC Program provides state-wide services to more than 10,000 residents, annually. As the demographics of the state continue to change, the primary care workforce must expand and respond to meet those changes. The CT AHEC Program is an invaluable resource to address these challenges at both a state and local level.

The CT AHEC Program utilizes federal, state and private funding to support:

- Inter-professional education and community based training programs for health professions students
- Promotion and retention of primary care providers in collaboration with state agencies
- Cultural competence and medical interpreting training to health professionals and trainees
- Dissemination and recruitment of health professional trainees in the National Health Service Corps
- Continuing medical education programs for public health and health care professionals
- pipeline educational programs to raise awareness of health careers for pre-health professions learners

In addition the BLS/CPR classes that Eastern AHEC currently provides to Generations Family Health Center staff, we have also utilized their Medical Interpreter training program. The mission of Eastern AHEC is aligned with Generations’ mission to provide quality, compassionate, and professional health care this affordable, easily accessible and without discrimination to all members of the communities we serve.

Eastern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Inc. is part of the Connecticut AHEC Network (CTAHEC) and was established in 1997. It provides its services and support in New London County and Windham County.

I personally feel that if CT AHEC Network is not restored to its funding level of \$406,723 that it would be very detrimental to the community. The proposed budget cut for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019 to \$378,349 will directly hinder the great work that CTAHEC has done and continues to do daily. I cannot express the consequences and unreplaceable void this would leave for the state of Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Below is my contact information for your convenience.

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